

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

The Ripcurl Project (proposed project) would provide a vertically mixed-use residential and commercial development with approximately 440 units of rental housing and approximately 10,000 square feet (sf) of commercial uses. Off-street parking would be provided in a three-story parking structure with one level of parking below grade and two levels of parking above grade. Located southeast of the intersection of Gothard Street and Center Avenue in the City of Huntington Beach, the project site is currently developed on approximately 3.8 acres of land.

The commercial component would be located on the ground level, adjacent to the above grade parking. Four levels of residential uses would be located over the street level commercial uses; a mezzanine level would also be located on the roof. The total project floor area, excluding parking and basement area would be approximately 382,700 sf. The buildings would be six stories and range from 60 to 66 feet in height.

The residential component would include approximately 301,100 sf of residential area and 7,000 sf of leasing, lobby, and recreation area. Of the 440 residential units, 151 would be studio units, 190 would be one-bedroom units, 88 would be two-bedroom units, and 11 would be live work loft units. Units would range in size from 465 sf (studio) to 1,037 sf (two-bedroom). Outdoor amenities provided by the residential component would include a pool and spa area, fire pit and movie projection area. Indoor amenities provided by the residential component would include a fitness center, business center, conference room, and clubhouse.

The commercial component of the proposed project would include up to 10,000 sf of ground floor space that would be located on the corner of Gothard Street and Center Avenue. The commercial component would target the Golden West College community and nearby, as well as project, residents. Potential tenants could include a convenience store, café, sandwich shop, cleaners, juice shop, and mailbox store.

The project includes a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to allow mixed use development on the site and establish the allowable residential density and FAR, as well as a Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) to establish the “Transit Center District” zoning for the site. In addition, the project proposes a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to establish development standards for the “Transit Center District.”

1.1 PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY

The proposed project requires the discretionary approval of the Huntington Beach City Council. Therefore, it is subject to the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA). In accordance with Section 15121 of the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to serve as an informational document that:

...will inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effect of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

The EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR pursuant to Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines. A Project EIR is appropriate for a specific development project. As stated in the CEQA Guidelines:

...this type of EIR should focus on the changes in the environment that would result from the development project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project, including planning, construction and operation.

This report is to serve as an informational document for the public and the City of Huntington Beach decision-makers. The process will culminate with a City hearing to consider certification of a Final EIR and a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

As a first step in complying with the procedural requirements of CEQA, the City prepared an Initial Study (IS) to determine whether any aspect of the project, either individually or cumulatively, may cause a significant effect on the environment and, if so, to narrow the focus (or scope) of the environmental analysis. For this project, the IS indicated that an EIR would be the appropriate type of environmental document to address potential environmental impacts resulting from project implementation.

After completion of the IS, the City filed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) with the California Office of Planning and Research indicating that an EIR would be prepared. In turn, the IS/NOP was distributed to appropriate public agencies for a 30-day public review period, which began on January 22, 2008 and ended on February 20, 2008. A scoping meeting was held on February 7, 2008. The purpose of the scoping period, including the scoping meeting, was to solicit comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the EIR. During the scoping period, the City received eleven written comment letters on the IS/NOP in addition to the verbal comments received at the scoping meeting. The IS/NOP, as well as the scoping comment letters and verbal comments, are included in Appendix A of this EIR.

During the preparation of this Draft EIR (DEIR), agencies, organizations, and persons who the City believed may have an interest in this project were specifically contacted. Information, data, and observations from these contacts are included in the DEIR. Agencies or interested persons who did not respond during the public review period of the IS/NOP will have an opportunity to comment during the 45-day public review period of the DEIR, as well as at subsequent hearings on the project.

This DEIR has been distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties for a 45-day review period in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. The DEIR is available for review at the following locations:

City of Huntington Beach
 Planning Department
 2000 Main Street
 Huntington Beach, CA 92648

City of Huntington Beach
 City Clerks Office
 2000 Main Street
 Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Central Library and Cultural Center
 7111 Talbert Avenue
 Huntington Beach, CA 92648

View and download the documents online at: www.surfcity-hb.org

Navigate to: [http://www.surfcity-hb.org/Governments/Departments/Planning/Major Projects/The Ripcurl Project](http://www.surfcity-hb.org/Governments/Departments/Planning/Major%20Projects/The%20Ripcurl%20Project)

All documents incorporated by reference in this EIR are available for review at the City.

Written comments on the DEIR should be addressed to:

Tess Nguyen, Associate Planner
 City of Huntington Beach
 Department of Planning
 2000 Main Street
 Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Upon completion of the 45-day public review period, written responses to all environmental comments received by public agencies and the public during the review period will be completed. These comments, and their responses, will be included in the Final EIR (FEIR) for consideration by the City of Huntington Beach, as well as any other public decision-makers. Furthermore, written responses to comments received from public agencies will be made available to those agencies at least ten days prior to the public hearing at which certification of the FEIR would be considered.

It should be noted that environmental impacts may not always be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. When this occurs, they are considered significant and unavoidable impacts. If a public agency approves a project that has significant and unavoidable impacts, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the FEIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed a “statement of overriding considerations” and is used to explain the specific reasons why the benefits of a proposed project make its unavoidable environmental effects acceptable. The statement is prepared, if required, based upon substantial evidence in the record and in conjunction with the action to approve the project, in accordance with Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines. Following project approval, a Notice of Determination is filed with the State Clearinghouse.

1.3 EIR ADEQUACY

The level of detail contained throughout this EIR is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15151) and recent court decisions, which provide the standard of adequacy on which this document is based. The Guidelines state as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information, which enables them to make a decision, which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection, but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

1.4 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

As previously mentioned, this EIR is intended to provide decision-makers and the public with information that enables them to consider the environmental consequences of the proposed project. EIRs not only identify significant or potentially significant environmental effects, but also identify ways in which those impacts can be reduced to less-than-significant levels, whether through the imposition of mitigation measures or through the implementation of specific alternatives to the project. In a practical sense, EIRs function as a technique for fact-finding, allowing an applicant, concerned citizens, and agency staff an opportunity to collectively review and evaluate baseline conditions and project impacts through a process of full disclosure.

To gain the most value from this report, certain key points should be kept in mind:

- This report should be used as a tool to give the reader an overview of the possible ramifications of the proposed project.
- A specific environmental impact is not necessarily irreversible or permanent. Most impacts, particularly in urban, more developed areas, can be wholly or partially mitigated by incorporating conditions of approval and/or changes recommended in this report during the design and construction phases of project development.
- This report, while a summary of facts, reflects the professional judgment of the authors. The EIR was prepared by consultants retained by the City and by City staff, and was subject to the independent review and judgment of the City. The City independently reviewed and analyzed the EIR for the proposed project, and the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE EIR

This EIR provides a project-specific analysis of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The scope of the EIR includes issues identified by the City of Huntington Beach during the preparation of the IS/NOP, comment letters received during the IS/NOP review period, and comments received at the scoping meeting.

Based on the potential impacts of the proposed project, this EIR evaluates the following environmental issues identified in Appendix G of the 2008 CEQA Guidelines:

- Aesthetics/Visual Quality
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems

In accordance with Section 15128 (Effects Not Found to Be Significant) of the CEQA Guidelines, the IS/NOP (Appendix A) provides reasons why certain environmental impacts were not considered significant and, therefore, are not addressed further in this EIR. These include the following issue areas:

- Agricultural Resources
- Mineral Resources

In preparing the EIR, pertinent city policies and guidelines, existing EIRs, and background documents prepared by the City were all evaluated for their applicability to the proposed project. A list of references is provided at the end of each issue area section in Chapter 4.

1.6 PROJECT SPONSORS AND CONTACT PERSONS

The City of Huntington Beach is the lead agency for the preparation of this EIR. The Applicant for the proposed project is Amstar Red Oak Huntington Beach, LLC. PBS&J is the environmental consultant to the City and the principal preparer of this EIR. Key contact persons are as follows:

Lead Agency:	City of Huntington Beach Department of Planning 2000 Main Street Huntington Beach, CA 92648
Lead Agency Contact:	Tess Nguyen, Associate Planner (714) 374-1744 tnguyen@surfcity-hb.org
Project Applicant:	Amstar/Red Oak Huntington Beach, LLC 2101 Business Center Drive, Suite 230 Irvine, CA 92612

EIR Consultant: PBS&J
 12301 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 430
 Los Angeles, CA 90025

1.7 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This EIR has been designed for easy use and reference. To help the reader locate information of particular interest, a brief summary of the contents of each chapter of the EIR is provided. The following chapters are contained within the EIR:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**—This section provides an overview of the proposed project, the environmental process, and document organization.
- **Chapter 2: Executive Summary**—This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project, the environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and residual impacts with the proposed project.
- **Chapter 3: Project Description**—This section includes the location and boundaries of the proposed project; project objectives; a general description of technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and intended uses of the EIR.
- **Chapter 4: Environmental Impact Analysis**—This section describes and evaluates the environmental issue areas, including the existing environmental setting, applicable environmental thresholds, environmental impacts (short term, long term, direct, and indirect), policy considerations related to the particular environmental issue area under analysis, and feasible mitigation measures capable of minimizing environmental harm.
- **Chapter 5: Other CEQA Considerations**—This section provides a summary of the proposed project's potential to lead to population growth and the indirect implications of that growth on the City; summarizes the discussion of cumulative impacts, provides a list of proposed project impacts that are significant and unavoidable by issue area; and identifies the irreversible changes to the natural environment resulting from the proposed project.
- **Chapter 6: Alternatives to the Proposed Project**—This section analyzes feasible alternatives to the proposed project, which include the no project alternative and a reduction in project scale.
- **Chapter 7: List of EIR Preparers**—This section identifies all individuals responsible for the preparation of this report.

1.8 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY TO BE RESOLVED

The discussion of environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, as summarized in Table 2-2 in Chapter 2 (Summary) and evaluated in detail in this EIR, constitutes the identification of issues to be resolved and areas of controversy, as required for compliance with Section 15123(b)(2) and 15123(b)(3) of the *California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA) Guidelines. Additionally, oral and written comments received during the public review period for the IS/NOP indicated that areas of controversy and potential issues to be resolved included the following: (1) aesthetics, (2) air quality, (3) nesting birds, (4) cultural resources, (5) geologic and seismic conditions, (6) high voltage towers and other hazards, (7) flooding and runoff (8) land use consistency and density, (9) noise and vibration, (10) population and

housing, (11) schools and safety issues, (12) parks, (13) parking, rail crossings, traffic, and (14) water quality. These issues are addressed within Section 4.1 (Aesthetics), Section 4.2 (Air Quality), Section 4.3 (Biological Resources), Section 4.4 (Cultural Resources), Section 4.5 (Geology and Soils), Section 4.6 (Hazards and Hazardous Materials), Section 4.7 (Hydrology and Water Quality), Section 4.8 (Land Use and Planning), Section 4.9 (Noise), Section 4.10 (Population and Housing), Section 4.11 (Public Services), Section 4.12 (Recreation), Section 4.13 (Transportation), and Section 4.14 (Utilities and Service Systems), respectively.

In addition, one comment asked whether a Fiscal Impact Study would be prepared for this project due to the General Plan Amendment that would be required for implementation. Such a study would present a comparison of the net costs and revenues derived from a development project and is not required as part of this EIR. As summarized from CEQA Guidelines Section 15131, economic or social effects of a project shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment. However, economic and social effects of a project may be used to determine the significance of physical changes caused by a project. Thus, the focus of the analysis in the EIR relies upon the potential physical changes of the proposed project.

1.9 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following comprehensive list of abbreviations is provided to clarify references used in this EIR.

Table 1-1 Acronyms and Abbreviations	
Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
2010 CPAH	2010 Circulation Plan of Arterial Highways
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AEP	Association of Environmental Professionals
AF	Acre-Feet
AFY	acre feet per year
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
AQMD	Air Quality Management District
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
AST	Aboveground storage tanks
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
BMP	best management practices
BPP	Basin Pumping Percentage
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CASQA	California Stormwater Quality Association

Table 1-1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
CAT	Climate Action Taskforce
CBC	California Building Code
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CDMG	California Department of Mines and Geology
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CG	Commercial General
CGS	California Geological Survey
CHP	California Highway Patrol
CIWMB	California Integrated Waste Management Board
CMA	Congestion Management Agency
CMP	Congestion Management Plan
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
COC	Constituents of Concern
CPAS&H	Circulation Plan of Arterial Streets and Highway
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CR	City Requirements
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CTR	California Toxics Rule Criteria
CTR	California Toxic Rules
CURMP	City of Huntington Beach Citywide Urban Runoff Management Plan
CWA	Clean Water Act
DAMP	Orange County Drainage Area Management Plan
dB	decibel
dBA	decibel scale
DOE	Department of Energy
DOF	Department of Finance
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPR	California State Department of Parks and Recreation
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substances Control

Table 1-1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMF	electromagnetic fields
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GAP	Green Acres Project
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GMP	Growth Management Plan
GPA	General Plan Amendment
gpd	Gallons per day
HBFD	Huntington Beach Fire Department
HBPD	Huntington Beach Police Department
HBTM	Huntington Beach Traffic Model
HBUHSD	Huntington Beach Union High School District
HCM	Highway Capacity Manual
HOV	High-Occupancy Vehicle
HSWA	Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments Act
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
ICU	intersection capacity utilization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IS	Initial Study
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
kWh	Kilowatts per hour
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
LOS	Level of Service
LSTs	localized significance thresholds
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MEP	Maximum Extent Practicable
mgd	million gallons per day
MM	Mitigation Measure
MPAH	Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways

Table 1-1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
MPD	City of Huntington Beach Master Plan of Drainage
MWD	Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
MWDOC	Metropolitan Water District of Orange County
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NHM	Natural History Museum
NIEHS	National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
NO ₂	Nitrogen dioxide
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPL	National Priorities List
NPMP	Nutrient and Pesticide Management Program
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSQD	National Stormwater Quality Database
OCCOG	Orange County Council of Governments
OCFCD	Orange County Flood Control District
OCP	Orange County Projections
OCSD	Orange County Sanitation District
OCTA	Orange County Transportation Authority
OCTAM	Orange County Transportation Analysis Model
OCWD	Orange County Water District
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OSHA	Occupational Health and Safety Administration
OVSD	Ocean View School District
Pb	Lead
PM ₁₀	Respirable Particulate Matter
PM _{2.5}	Fine Particulate Matter
RCPG	Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide
RCRA	Resources Conservation and Recovery Act
RELOOC	Regional Landfill Options for Orange County
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Assessment
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
RWQCBs	Regional Water Quality Control Boards
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SARB	Santa Ana River Basin
SARWQCB	Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

Table 1-1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Definition
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCCIC	South Central Coastal Information Center
SCE	Southern California Edison
SCGC	Southern California Gas Company
SF	Square-Feet
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SRA	Source Receptor Area
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TACs	Toxic Air Contaminants
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIA	Traffic Impact Analysis
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
U.S. EPA	United States Environmental Protection Act
UBC	Uniform Building Code
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
URMP	Urban Runoff Management Program
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground storage tanks
UWMP	City of Huntington Beach Urban Water Management Plan
V/C	Volume/capacity
VdB	vibration decibels
VOCs	volatile organic compounds
VPD	vehicles per day
WDRs	Waste Discharge Requirements
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
ZMA	Zoning Map Amendment
ZTA	Zoning Text Amendment